

Journal of The Barnes Foundation

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ILLUSTRATIONS: Paintings by Renoir

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THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
of
THE BARNES FOUNDATION

comprises:

1. Three separate courses at the University of Pennsylvania, viz.: (a) Modern Art; (b) Research in Plastic Art, conducted by Thomas Munro, Ph.D.; (c) The Aesthetic Experience, conducted by Laurence Buermeyer, Ph.D.

2. A course entitled "Applied Aesthetics" at Columbia University, New York City, conducted by Thomas Munro, Ph.D.

All the above courses may be elected for credit toward various degrees, graduate and undergraduate.

3. Seminars, lectures, demonstrations and classes for teachers of art, painters, writers and non-professional people, conducted in the Foundation buildings by Albert C. Barnes, Laurence Buermeyer, Thomas Munro, Mary Mullen and Sara Carles.

4. The Foundation's publications:

An Approach to Art	. . .	By Mary Mullen
The Aesthetic Experience	. . .	By Laurence Buermeyer
The Art in Painting	. . .	By Albert C. Barnes

are in use in over fifty American universities and colleges, and in the public school systems of numerous important cities. These books are used also as text and standard works of reference in classes conducted in many important art galleries, including the Louvre, Paris, and the Metropolitan Museum, New York City.

5. Three courses in the study of plastic art are conducted from June 1 to September 1 in the art galleries of Europe by our own educational staff.

6. Research in arboriculture and horticulture is conducted in the Foundation's own Arboretum under the direction of Joseph Lapsley Wilson, Laura L. Barnes and John W. Prince.

7. The educational staff of the Barnes Foundation renders consultation service to various universities, colleges, schools, cities and galleries in matters relating to courses in the study of plastic art.

JOURNAL *of* THE BARNES FOUNDATION

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No. 1

Individuality and Experience.

BY JOHN DEWEY.

THE interesting report of Dr. Munro in the October number of this *Journal* on the methods of picture-making employed in the classes of Professor Cizek in Vienna raises a question that has to be dealt with in every branch of instruction. The question develops in two directions, one suggested by his statement that it is impossible to exclude outside influences, and the other by his report that upon the whole the more original constructions are those of younger pupils, that older students seem gradually to lose interest, so that no prominent artist has been produced. The problem thus defined consists in the relation of individuality and its adequate development to the work and responsibilities of the teacher, representing accumulated experience of the past.

Unfortunately, the history of schools not only in art but in all lines shows a swing of the pendulum between extremes, though it must be admitted that the simile of the pendulum is not a good one, for the schools remain most of them, most of the time, near one extreme, instead of swinging periodically and evenly between the two. Anyway, the two extremes are external imposition and dictation and "free-expression." Revolt from the costly, nerve-taxing and inadequate results of mechanical control from without creates an enthusiasm for spontaneity and "development from within," as it is often phrased. It is found that children at first are then much happier in their work—anyone who has seen Cizek's class will testify to the wholesome air of cheerfulness, even of joy, which pervades the room—but gradually tend to become listless and finally bored, while there is an absence of cumulative, progressive development of power and of actual achievement in results. Then the pendulum swings back to regulation by the ideas, rules, and orders of some one else, who being maturer, better informed and more experienced is supposed to know what should be done and how to do it.

The metaphor of the pendulum is faulty in another respect. It seems to suggest that the solution lies in finding a mid-point between the two extremes which would be at rest. But what is really wanted is a change in the direction of movement. As a general proposition no one would deny that personal mental growth is furthered in any branch of human undertaking by contact with the accumulated and sifted experience of others in that line. No one would seriously propose that all future carpenters should be trained by actually starting with a clean sheet, wiping out everything that the past has discovered about mechanics, about tools and their uses and so on. It would not be thought likely that this knowledge would "cramp their style," limit their individuality, etc. But neither, on the other hand, have carpenters been formed by the methods often used in manual training shops where dinky tasks of a minute and technical nature are set, wholly independent of really making anything, having only specialized skill as their aim. As a rule carpenters are educated in their calling by working with others who have experience and skill, sharing in the simpler portions of the real undertakings, assisting in ways which enable them to observe methods and to see what results they are adapted to accomplish.

Such learning is controlled by two great principles: one is participation in something inherently worth while, or undertaken on its own account; the other, is perception of the relation of means to consequences. When these two conditions are met, a third consideration usually follows as a matter of course. Having had an experience of the meaning of certain technical processes and forms of skill there develops an interest in skill and "technique;" the meaning of the result is "transferred" to the means of its attainment. Boys interested in base-ball as a game thus submit themselves voluntarily to continued practice in throwing, catching, batting, the separate elements of the game. Or boys, who get interested in the game of marbles will practice to increase their skill in shooting and hitting. Just imagine, however, what would happen if they set these exercises as tasks in school, with no prior activity in the games and with no sense of what they were about or for, and without any such appeal to the social, or participating impulses, as takes place in games!

If we generalize from such a commonplace case as the education of artisans through their work, we may say that the customs, methods and *working* standards of the calling constitute a "tradition," and that initiation into the tradition is the means by which the powers of learners are released and directed. But we should

also have to say that the urge or need of an individual to join in an undertaking is a necessary prerequisite of the tradition's being a factor in his personal growth in power and freedom; and also that he has to *see* on his own behalf and in his own way the relations between means and methods employed and results achieved. Nobody else can see for him, and he can't see just by being "told," although the right kind of telling may guide his seeing and thus help him see what he needs to see. And if he has no impelling desire of his own to become a carpenter, if his interest in being one is perfunctory, if it is not an interest in *being* a carpenter at all, but only in getting a pecuniary reward by doing jobs, the tradition will never of course really enter into and integrate with his own powers. It will remain, then, a mere set of mechanical and more or less meaningless rules that he is obliged to follow if he is to hold his job and draw his pay.

Supposing, again, that our imaginary pupil works for and with a master carpenter who believes in only one kind of house with a fixed design, and his aim is not only to teach his apprentice to make just that one kind of house, but to accept it with all his soul, heart and mind as the only kind of house that should ever be built, the very type and standard model of all houses. Then it is easy to see that limitation of personal powers will surely result, not merely, moreover, limitation of technical skill but, what is more important, of his powers of observation, imagination, judgment, and even his emotions, since his appreciations will be warped to conform to the one preferred style. The imaginary case illustrates what often happens when we pass from the education of artisans to that of artists. As a rule a carpenter has to keep more or less open; he is exposed to many demands and must be flexible enough to meet them. He is in no position to set up a final authority about ends and models and standards, no matter how expert he may be in methods and means. But an architect in distinction from a builder is likely to be an "authority;" he can dictate and lay down what is right and wrong, and thus prescribe certain ends and proscribe others. Here is a case where tradition is not enhancing and liberating, but is restrictive and enslaving. If he has pupils, he is a "master" and not an advanced fellow worker; his students are disciples rather than learners. Tradition is no longer tradition but a fixed and absolute convention.

In short, the practical difficulty does not reside in any antagonism of methods and rules and results worked out in past experience to individual desire, capacity and freedom. It lies rather in the hard and narrow and, we may truly say, uneducated

habits and attitudes of teachers who set up as authorities, as rulers and judges in Israel. As a matter of course they know that as bare individuals they are not "authorities" and will not be accepted by others as such. So they clothe themselves with some tradition as a mantle, and henceforth it is not just "I" who speaks, but some Lord speaks through me. The teacher then offers himself as the organ of the voice of a whole school, of a *finished* classic tradition, and arrogates to himself the prestige that comes from what he is the spokesman for. Suppression of the emotional and intellectual integrity of pupils is the result; their freedom is repressed and the growth of their own personalities stunted. But it is not because of any opposition between the wisdom and skill of the past and the individual capacities of learners; the trouble lies in the habits, standards and ideas of the teacher. It is analogous to another case. There is no inherent opposition between theory and practice; the former enlarges, releases and gives significance to the latter; while practice supplies theory with its materials and with the test and check which keeps it sincere and vital. But there is a whole lot of opposition between human beings who set themselves up as practical and those who set themselves up as theorists, an irresolvable conflict because both have put themselves into a wrong position.

This suggests that the proponents of freedom are in a false position as well as the would-be masters and dictators. There is a present tendency in so-called advanced schools of educational thought (by no means confined to art classes like those of Cizek) to say, in effect, let us surround pupils with certain materials, tools, appliances, etc., and then let pupils respond to these things according to their own desires. Above all let us not suggest any end or plan to the students; let us not suggest to them what they shall do, for that is an unwarranted trespass upon their sacred intellectual individuality since the essence of such individuality is to set up ends and aims.

Now such a method is really stupid. For it attempts the impossible, which is always stupid; and it misconceives the conditions of independent thinking. There are a multitude of ways of reacting to surrounding conditions, and without some guidance from experience these reactions are almost sure to be casual, sporadic and ultimately fatiguing, accompanied by nervous strain. Since the teacher has presumably a greater background of experience, there is the same presumption of the right of a teacher to make suggestions as to what to do, as there is on the part of the head carpenter to suggest to apprentices something of what they are to do. Moreover, the theory literally carried

out would be obliged to banish all artificial materials, tools and appliances. Being the product of the skill, thought and matured experience of others, they would also, by the theory, "interfere" with personal freedom.

Moreover, when the child proposes or suggests what to do, some consequence to be attained, whence is the suggestion supposed to spring from? There is no spontaneous germination in the mental life. If he does not get the suggestion from the teacher, he gets it from somebody or something in the home or the street or from what some more vigorous fellow pupil is doing. Hence the chances are great of its being a passing and superficial suggestion, without much depth and range—in other words, not specially conducive to the developing of freedom. If the teacher is really a teacher, and not just a master or "authority," he should know enough about his pupils, their needs, experiences, degrees of skill and knowledge etc., to be able (not to dictate aims and plans) to share in a discussion regarding what is to be done and be as free to make suggestions as any one else. (The implication that the teacher is the one and only person who has no "individuality" or "freedom" to "express" would be funny if it were not often so sad in its outworkings.) And his contribution, given the conditions stated, will presumably do more to getting something started which will really secure and increase the development of strictly individual capacities than will suggestions springing from uncontrolled haphazard sources.

The point is also worth dwelling upon, that the method of leaving the response entirely to pupils, the teacher supplying, in the language of the day, only the "stimuli," misconceives the nature of thinking. Any so-called "end" or "aim" or "project" which the average immature person can suggest in advance is likely to be highly vague and unformed, a mere outline sketch, not a suggestion of a definite result or consequence but rather a gesture which roughly indicates a field within which activities might be carried on. It hardly represents thought at all: it is a suggestion. The real intellectual shaping of the "end" or purpose comes during and because of the operations subsequently performed. This is as true of the suggestion which proceeds from the teacher as of those which "spontaneously" spring from the pupils, so that the former does not restrict thought. The advantage on the side of the teacher—if he or she has any business to be in that position—is the greater probability that it will be a suggestion which will permit and require thought in the subsequent activity which builds up a clear and organized conception of an end. There is no more fatal flaw in psychology than

that which takes the original vague fore-feeling of some consequence to be realized as the equivalent of a *thought* of an end, a true purpose and directive plan. The thought of an end is strictly correlative to perception of means and methods. Only when, and as the latter becomes clear during the serial process of execution does the project and guiding aim and plan become evident and articulated. In the full sense of the word, a person becomes aware of what he wants to do and what he is about only when the work is actually complete.

The adjective "serial" is important in connection with the process of performance or execution. Each step forward, each "means" used, is a partial attainment of an "end." It makes clearer the character of that end, and hence suggests to an observing mind the next step to be taken, or the means and methods to be next employed. Originality and independence of thinking are therefore connected with the intervening process of execution rather than with the source of the initial suggestion. Indeed, genuinely fruitful and original suggestions are themselves usually the results of experience in the carrying out of undertakings. The "end" is not, in other words, an end or finality in the literal sense, but is in turn the starting point of new desires, aims and plans. By means of the process the mind gets power to make suggestions which are significant. There is now a past experience from which they can spring with an increased probability of their being worthwhile and articulate.

It goes without saying that a teacher may interfere and impose alien standards and methods during the operation. But as we have previously seen, this is not because of bringing to bear the results of previous experience, but because the habits of the teacher are so narrow and fixed, his imagination and sympathies so limited, his own intellectual horizon so bounded, that he brings them to bear in a wrong way. The fuller and richer the experience of the teacher, the more adequate his own knowledge of "traditions" the more likely is he, given the attitude of participator instead of that of master, to use them in a liberating way.

Freedom or individuality, in short, is not an original possession or gift. It is something to be achieved, to be wrought out. Suggestions as to things which may advantageously be taken, as to skill, as to methods of operation, are indispensable conditions of its achievement. These by the nature of the case must come from a sympathetic and discriminating knowledge of what has been done in the past and how it has been done.

Learning to See.

BY MARY MULLEN.

THE educational program of the Barnes Foundation was started a little more than a year ago and the experience has been sufficiently interesting and instructive to warrant a statement of some of its significant details. Before we obtained a charter as an educational institution, the larger part of our present staff had been engaged in a practical experiment that had two main features: first, a linking-up of the modern conceptions of psychology and aesthetics with a first-hand observation of old and modern paintings; second, through the experience thus gained, an application of modern educational methods in a class of students of diverse degrees of culture and social rank. The experiment covered a period of ten years and the results, when analyzed by educational authorities, were considered of sufficient importance to justify the extension of the plan to universities, colleges, schools and, particularly, to groups of people who had never had the advantages of a college education or the opportunity to study good paintings.

We were fortunate in securing the coöperation of two of the largest and best-known of eastern universities to the extent of having the plan embodied at those institutions in regular courses conducted by members of our own educational staff. These courses, at first isolated, were soon recognized by progressive members of the faculties as of fundamental importance to their courses in philosophy, aesthetics and fine arts and these branches have been integrated into an organic system which is now in operation. The unique feature is the opportunity and the requirement to supplement the theoretical part with first-hand study of the large collection of old and modern paintings housed in the Foundation's gallery.

Within a few months of the announcement of the Foundation as an educational institution there appeared about a score of articles in various American and European magazines written by men well-known in art and educational circles. As a result of this unsought-for publicity, we were overwhelmed with applications from institutions and individuals who desired to avail themselves of what we had to offer. The correspondence yielded

a wealth of leads which, under suitable circumstances, could be made extremely valuable material for further educational experiments in the paths which we had already followed for more than a decade. We found oceans of enthusiasm which would have been of inestimable power if it had been accompanied with sufficient intelligence to meet the first requisite of any serious educational movement. That disbalance was manifested in quarters of considerable eminence in the educational world and almost invariably the plea for admission presented by such applicants was that of prestige. After we had eliminated triflers and would-be exploiters from serious consideration, there was sufficient promising material to occupy our buildings every day with classes of adult students enrolled for systematic study. Some of the results thus far obtained, as well as the suggestions for a constructive plan for art education which was born of that experience, have been published in previous numbers of this Journal. The present article will deal more particularly with a few of the chief difficulties encountered.

We were handicapped at the start by the fact that a majority of our students had dabbled in art in college courses, art academies, public lectures, etc. This necessitated attempts to change the superstitions that painting represents either a pattern, a set of fixed rules for the use of color, line and space, or a (unsuspected) confusion of narrative, historical or moral values suffused with a mystical glow. In each of these cases of mistaken identity the outstanding common factor was the demonstrable *inability to see*. How almost universal is that defect is not suspected until specific tests of aesthetic vision are made. One of the few worthwhile art critics, Leo Stein, writes: "Many young persons take to painting because they have a natural aptitude for pictorial expression, and then never get anywhere because they never learn to see." How difficult it is to convince even mature painters of the truth of Mr. Stein's statement cannot be realized except by a teacher familiar with modern educational methods who has made experiments tending to remove the obstacle. This learning to see is of such vital importance that it merits the more detailed consideration contained in a recital of some observations made in our classes.

Several of the professors of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, who were granted permission to bring their students to our gallery, became so much interested that they asked to attend the regular talks by our educational staff in front of the paintings. At one of these sessions the subject was the analysis

of space as an element in plastic form, and its characteristics and significance were demonstrated in paintings that covered the period from the Florentines to the moderns. In the work of a contemporary, Kisling, it was pointed out that it was his skilled use of space, more than of any other means, that gave the painting its aesthetic value. Thereupon one of the Academy professors volunteered the statement that until that moment he had never liked the Kisling and that he had never seen the fine spatial relations which, after they had been pointed out, converted his dislike into pleasure. A different aspect of this inability to see is exemplified in the case of another of this group of Academy professors whose work reveals the influence of Matisse. He fails to see that what makes the work of Matisse important is that, while the decorative element is more in evidence, there is present sufficient grasp of presentation of the significant features of experience, to change the character of the painting from mere decoration to personal expression in balanced plastic form. Consequently, the professor's own painting presents a thin version of Matisse's decorative character and not any of the expression that constitutes insight into reality.

Still another instance of the inability to see is represented in the case of the author of a recent book on art appreciation that was written before he became a member of one of our classes. The thesis of the book is sound only so long as it keeps to the assertion that the appeal of subject matter should not be confused with art values. Woven around this truism, is a theory made up of paraphrases of the mystification published by men like Clive Bell and the late Jay Hambidge as explanations of what makes a painting a work of art. There emerges from this curious medley a demonstration that what the author considers to be the essential art value is pattern, a totally subsidiary element in plastic form.

One of the most striking cases of utter blindness in people who are supposed to know something about art was represented by an instructor at the Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington, D. C. His blindness was evidenced by his remarks about two of our paintings which analyses in plastic terms reveal as among the most important achievements in contemporary painting. The "Three Sisters" by Matisse, he said, is "so slight that it is not entitled to serious consideration." Pascin's "Femme Assise" was condemned because the drawing did not fit into the formula which he recited as the recipe for art. Protean variations of this disorder are duplicated a dozen times in our records of the observations of the behavior of men and women, in the

presence of paintings, who teach art in universities, colleges, schools, public galleries and art academies throughout America. Consequently we were forced at the start to study the psychological principles which explain the condition and to adapt educational methods to overcome it.

Although the manifestations of this inability to see are so varied, its cause is to be found in a failure to grasp certain simple fundamental principles of psychology which no well-informed person would dispute. To see means to perceive, to bring to consciousness; recognition of what constitutes perception and consciousness are, therefore, indispensable. Another truism is that since perception and consciousness are inseparably connected with appreciation, which is a mental state, it follows that mind is the chief factor to be considered. The connecting links between seeing in the sense of perception, of consciousness, and of mind are most clearly and convincingly presented in Professor Dewey's new book *Experience and Nature*. What he writes not only explains the inability to see but points the way to supplant the blindness with the experience which constitutes genuine art appreciation. A word of vital importance in the building of this new structure is "meaning." In each of the above-mentioned instances of blindness in relation to painting, there is a clear perversion of the rational conception of the word "meaning." To be specific: one of the Academy professors failed to recognize the meaning of space in the construction of an artist's creation; another professor did not see that his own preoccupation with decorative qualities prevented him from grasping the meaning of Matisse's message; the author referred to would confine an artist's expression to a mere pattern of lines and space built up according to mathematical formulas; the instructor at the Corcoran Art Gallery applied the meaning of an outworn academic formula to Matisse's and Pascin's individual variations of the great traditions of painting as a means of embodying their personal reactions to the world. However, if art is a fragment of life presented to us enriched in feeling by means of the creative spirit of the artist, it is irrational to believe that mathematics, formulas, mere pattern or decoration, etc., would supply means adequate to the extraordinarily complex manifestations of the human spirit. More rational, indeed demonstrable, is the belief that the artist's work is an expression of an experience which he has undergone, and that the meaning of the painting is that experience.

This conception of meaning as synonymous with experience,

is one of the fundamentals upon which Dewey builds those conceptions of consciousness and mind which have revolutionized educational practice and enabled people to understand and enjoy their own experiences in all the activities of life. Dewey writes that "consciousness denotes the perception of meanings," that is, the "awareness of the heres and nows;" and that "mind denotes the whole system of meanings as they are embodied in the workings of organic life." If we submit these definitions to the test of concrete situations in any phase of life, including the study of paintings, there is a convincing adequacy to the meanings of our own experience. Fixed rules give way to the boundless field which human beings, whether they be the creators or the appreciators of art, must have if their spirit is to be free and unhampered. In short, art is a record of experience, and education in art consists in an application of method that takes into account the human attributes of both the artist and the student. Fortunately, experiments in educational science have developed methods which have records of proved value obtained through actual experience.

It is the above-noted conceptions of perception, consciousness, mind, art, that we have tried to weld with modern educational methods, to remedy the widespread inability to see, by the experience without which art is devoid of meaning and becomes a superstition. The recognition of consciousness as the "awareness of the meanings of the heres and nows" points the way to all the goals, but it will lead to none until those present meanings become live and significant in relation to that whole system of meanings, which constitutes mind; in other words, mind contains the luminosity that gives color, quality, precision, to the "heres and nows." For example, if we look for a story or a moral in a painting, our mind holds the meaning that a painting is a story, not a record of an experience presented through the creative use of line, color and space. If we like Titian and do not like Renoir, we have failed to see the meaning of the "heres and nows" in the case of each artist; that is, from the organized meanings which constitute our mind there is missing that meaning which makes the work of the two artists closely akin. If we like both men, our minds contain the meaning that the "here and now" in each painter is the use of line, color and space in a similar manner to create something which is independent of subject-matter. In this case, another meaning in our minds is that art is not imitation but creation; and how can we differentiate between imitation and creation unless we have in our minds a clear grasp, that is,

the meaning, of the tradition as it is represented in Titian; and the consciousness, that is, the perception of the "here and now," that Renoir modified the Titian tradition to his own ends and that by so doing he created something new, and by the same plastic means as Titian used?

It thus becomes apparent that a thing is seen only when its significance is perceived in the light shed by the organized meanings which is mind. To thus see, means that there is, as it were, "a series of flashes of varying intensities" (perception, consciousness), thrown intermittently upon that persistent, substantial structure of meanings which is mind. Experience is possible only when that duplex action takes place, and it is valuable only when both factors in the situation are constantly alive to the finer shades of meanings which this interplay reveals. The absence of that interplay explains the blindness of the painters and educators above referred to and their unsuitability to act as guides to younger people who seek help in expressing themselves or in learning to appreciate the artistic expressions of others. It is the development of that interplay which is the goal of all modern educational science.

Educators complain incessantly that the most difficult of their tasks is to get rid of the set of fixed forms which, especially in adults, masquerade as thinking and prevent the process of learning by experience. That difficulty has been ours and, because of the prevalence of outworn and irrational methods in teaching art, progress has been even slower than in other fields where the objective features of experience are more susceptible to verifiable observation.

From the start we have kept in mind the essentially experimental character of our venture and for material we have drawn upon various sources, such as young painters, school and college students and teachers, writers, people in the ordinary walks of life. Large numbers of students from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts were admitted several days a week accompanied by their professors. We made no attempt at instruction but spent our time in observing the behavior, including the remarks, of the professors and the students. After about four months of this experience, it was clear to everybody, including the intelligent minority of the students, that nothing of educational value came of their repeated visits. Their professors, never having been taught to see, either confined their remarks to unimportant matters of painting technique or spread the kind of diffuse, free-floating emotion that characterizes the behavior of those in

whom superstition functions in the place of definite ideas and intelligent method brought to bear on paintings. In fact, from the educational standpoint, these professors and their students got hardly more out of their visits than did the group of bankers, lawyers and college professors who had also been admitted frequently. To the most intelligent member of the faculty of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts we suggested that we coöperate in an effort to work out a plan by which their students could be guided toward an intelligent approach to paintings. The professor confessed that no such plan had even been attempted at the Academy and that its mere suggestion by him would be likely to cause his dismissal from its faculty. The experiment yielded to us a group of about a score of painters and students of paintings who are now enrolled in our various classes. We learned also from this and similar experiences that aimless wandering in a gallery is about on a par with the day-dreaming furnished by attendance at the movies. As a consequence, no persons are admitted now except those enrolled for systematic study.

What is the meaning of "systematic study" of paintings? The three books published by members of our educational staff state the plan from the three indispensable standpoints, psychology, aesthetics and educational method. Any attempt to summarize here the plan in a form sufficiently full to give even its bare essentials is foredoomed to failure. All one could hope to do in this limited space is to state a few general educational principles upon which the method is based. For example, we start with the axiom that education is another name for meeting the practical problems of life, one of which is the significance of art. It results from a reaction between an individual and his environment, and in our case that problem is to establish a reaction between the qualities common to all human beings, and a collection of works of old and modern art. We accept the modern conception that mind is not something in itself, but a course of action in which aims, ends, selection of means to attain ends, are intelligently directed. We find that the individual and the world are engaged in a constantly developing situation. This, and this only, results in experience—an environment which affects the individual and which in turn is affected by him. From experience arises culture, that is, the constant expansion of the range and accuracy of the perceptions which the individual obtains from the varied contacts with life. Education, thus carried out, develops initiative, inventiveness and the ability

of the individual to readapt himself to the constantly changing situation which is life. We have found it an adventure, as much fun as playing a game, and enjoyable for the same reason.

All these principles are indispensable parts of modern educational science; they seem so much matters of common sense, that it is almost incredible that anybody would balk at accepting them as the intelligent way to approach the study of paintings. However, when various institutions applied for the privilege of "studying" our paintings and we asked them to furnish evidence that their courses in art showed that their students had had preliminary training according to those principles, they were stunned at what they considered our effrontery.

Another difficulty was furnished by a large number of adults whose vocations or avocations show that the aesthetic phases of life really mean something of vital importance to them. Many of this group are painters, more of them are interested in music, literature, teaching, public movements in the line of civic culture. Our object is ultimately to offer to this class of people an integration of the values created by great thinkers and great artists, with life itself. That object seemed as sensible to us as did our wish to have universities and colleges put to work the contributions which came from the real creators in their own ranks. But we encountered the same inertia, the same pious wish for knowledge, the same desire to day-dream in our gallery—in short, the desire to get something for nothing. The objection was offered that these people are "practical," don't want "book-stuff." This amuses us because our twelve-acre park, our beautiful buildings and our hundreds of paintings were all acquired by merely transferring that "book-stuff" to the events of every day life, which means business and leisure, work and play. The difficulty with these "practical" people was solved, at least for us, by the same means that solved the problem with the universities, colleges and schools: that is, we make the price of identification with our project, the manifestation of *interest*. In order to avoid misunderstanding, we have defined interest as "an anxiety concerning future consequences which impels the individual to do something to obtain better consequences and avoid worse ones." We invite criticism of the definition and ask merely that any acts which seem to deny that definition be subjected to a disinterested body of thinkers whose decision shall be final. The idea seems to have worked out fairly well, for we have classes in our buildings every day, including Sunday.

The title of this article, "Learning to See," may seem far-

etched; but if one considers that the process of seeing implies that the perception of objects in the external world is valuable in proportion as the mind illuminates those perceptions, "seeing" becomes but another name for experience, for education and for culture. It makes of seeing, something individual, whether the one who sees is an artist or an appreciator. Our job is to attempt to rewed these two natural mates after their divorce brought about by the educational disorder that would make art something apart from every-day life.

"The mother who seeks to soothe her crying child preaches him no sermon. She holds up some bright object and it fixes his attention. So it is the artist acts: he makes us see. He brings the world before us, not on the plane of covetousness and fears and commandments, but on the plane of representation; the world becomes a spectacle. Instead of imitating those philosophers who with analyses and syntheses worry over the goal of life, and the justification of the world, and the meaning of the strange and painful phenomenon called Existence, the artist takes up some fragment of that existence, transfigures it, shows it: There! And therewith the spectator is filled with enthusiastic joy, and the transcendent Adventure of Existence is justified. Every great artist, a Dante or a Shakespeare, a Dostoievsky or a Proust, thus furnishes the metaphysical justification of existence by the beauty of the vision he presents of the cruelty and the horror of existence. All the pain and madness, even the ugliness and the commonplace of the world, he converts into shining jewels. By revealing the spectacular character of reality he restores the serenity of its innocence. We see the face of the world as of a lovely woman smiling through her tears."—HAVELOCK ELLIS, *The Dance of Life*.

Renoir.*

BY ALBERT C. BARNES.

AT all stages of his career,† Renoir's work was as personal and his use of the plastic means as original as that of any painter since the time of the Renaissance. His earliest work was done under the influence of Courbet and of the Velasquez-Goya tradition; but Courbet's naturalism is freed from its heaviness and the Velasquez-Goya influence is endowed with a new delicacy and charm reminiscent of the Eighteenth Century French painters, though with an added note of strength.

From the very start Renoir's mastery of color and his extraordinary facility in using paint are the outstanding characteristics. His work of the early seventies is a long succession of pictures that, for color and difficult achievements with paint, compare with any by his great predecessors. The paintings of figures and of interiors at that period have deep reality with a strength, delicacy and charm that make them comparable to the best work of Velasquez, Vermeer, Chardin and Corot. Goya's superb rendering of the light, diaphanous quality of stuffs is carried to greater heights by Renoir's finer feeling for color: a piece of filmy material covering a darker one is so painted that the individuality of each textile is reinforced by a rich but transparent glow.

These early pictures of Renoir were painted before the development of the impressionistic use of divided color tones. At that period he worked somewhat in the manner of Manet's simplifications and broad brush-work but with more and richer color and with less evidence of Manet's obvious technique. There is no suggestion of the reds which he afterwards employed profusely, but there is great sensuous richness everywhere, heightened by the blue tinting of the shadows, variegated in the background by chords of color, merged with line, and so pervasively active as to function powerfully in composing the picture. The drawing is done chiefly with color and there is a striking fluidity of line. Every painting is a composite of many subsidiary designs,

* Reprinted from Dr. Barnes's new book, *The Art in Painting*; Barnes Foundation Press, Price, \$6.00.

† See also *The Art in Painting*, Appendix, pp. 469 to 484.

made up of line, light and color, and merged into units that relate themselves to each other harmoniously. The light arranges itself into a subtle pleasing pattern and also contributes to the modelling, in which color does not yet operate so powerfully as in the later pictures. The three-dimensional effects are not emphasized but are subtle, achieved without apparent effort, and they have a degree of convincing reality akin, sometimes to that of Vermeer or Corot, sometimes to Velasquez's.

The transition to Renoir's next period is marked by a change in technique. In the pictures painted in the late seventies there are suggestions of the impressionistic use of juxtaposed brush-strokes or spots or streaks of contrasting color, which at a distance fuse into a single expanse of bright color; but the effect is a certain obviousness of technique which was later overcome. Contrasted with his earlier pictures, these show a greater variety of colors. The rather uniform blue and ivory previously employed are supplemented by reds, yellows, and browns, used sometimes pure, sometimes modified with light, so that a whole gamut of color-variations is secured. As time goes on, this method of painting in juxtaposed color-spots is used more and more, but it is always used judiciously and is varied by means of broad areas of paint in certain parts of the canvas. This method causes the colors to melt into each other and gives a creamy, velvety quality, as in the "Pourville" landscape, and an opulent decorative effect which Monet never secured. At other times, the predominance of color-spots used in connection with bright sunlight, as in the "Bougival" landscape, yields comparatively superficial effects, more like those of Monet and Sisley.

In all of the landscapes of the early eighties there is extensive use of the divisionistic manner, but its application to different material is so infinitely resourceful that both the color and the compositional effects are far more varied and powerful than those of Monet.

Renoir's researches in the impressionistic manner developed new technical resources that merged perfectly with his previous Velasquez-Goya-Manet methods. The realistic results of his earlier period were increased by sensuous charm, by an added structural use of color, and by a glowing iridescence. His contributions had changed the impressionistic technique from a mere device into a power for greater creation and more complete organization of the whole painting. It became one of the great and firmly founded traditions.



Renoir

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During the eighties Renoir developed temporarily a third style, marked by sharp, incisive line and dryness, almost acidity, of color. Its obvious linear quality led critics to assert that Renoir's work of that period is closely akin to that of Ingres, but the resemblance is all on the surface. The radical difference is that in Ingres the line is fundamental and the color, which is comparatively perfunctory, thin, and unreal, is mere decoration added to the linear structure. In Renoirs even of that period, it is the color that is fundamental; it builds up structures and welds together compositions as it never does in Ingres. The sharp line is merely a particular way of bringing colors into relation, and it compels the eye to follow the rhythms of color as constituting masses in deep space, rather than the movement and direction of the line itself. Ingres's line is tight and restrained, while Renoir's is free and more expressive of abandon.

Renoir's manner at this time is often considered a regression to the methods of earlier painters, but, as pointed out in the analysis ("Woman Carrying Baby,"* page 18) the modelling and all the other uses of the plastic means are distinctly Renoir's own. That the method was clearly an experiment in the direction of new color forms is shown, and justified, by the fact that the sharp line and the acid color gave a fluid, luminous quality to the forms such as no other painter ever achieved except in water-color. The worst that can be said of these pictures is that the color is structurally less successful than it later became and it was probably for that reason that Renoir abandoned the method.

In the late eighties, he turned his attention toward the development of a technique that would enable him to render the movement of volumes in deep space, and in 1889 he succeeded in doing it with great conviction and appeal. These masses are so free from minute detail or obvious realism that to an inexperienced observer they often seem to be scarcely solid at all. But plastically considered they realize perfectly the essence of the massive quality, without its adventitious detail, in a degree comparable to that of Rembrandt and Velasquez. The rhythm is made more pervasive and powerful (see analysis of "Mt. St. Victoire,"†) by the flow of color throughout the picture, partly by the modification of local color in the interest of harmony and partly by the use of a color suffusion which recalls the Venetian glow. As Renoir perfected his individual

* See Appendix in *The Art in Painting*.

† See Appendix in *The Art in Painting*.

form, the rendering of masses gradually became less clearly defined, more floating and vaporous, but not less convincing. The impressionistic technique has become more and more generalized, and the individual brush-strokes appear subtly, and only in restricted parts of the canvas. By this time Renoir had reached the point of giving the large-scale effects of landscape with an impressiveness worthy of Claude, to which he added the grasp of the spirit of local place, the *intime* charm of Constable. This combination of epic grandeur, of charm, and of a dramatic quality reminiscent of Hobbema, appears in Renoir's landscape painting throughout the rest of his life.

In the nineties the technique itself comes to be so completely flexible that a distinctive quality is given to each repetition of the same subject in only slightly altered form. At this period he painted a series of pictures of the same young girl, each of which is so varied in color and drawing that there is no suggestion of duplication. Delicacy, charm, and reality are attained in each one, but they are different and distinctive in each case. Drawing, by means of color, has become extremely fluid, and there is fidelity to the characteristic feeling of things worthy of Velasquez. Literalism is completely avoided and all the ordinary means of rendering solidity, outline, perspective, begin to be replaced by obvious distortions. The interest in pure design comes to be more and more in control. Recognizable objects never fully disappear, but they are very freely rendered and their significance becomes almost purely plastic, that is, they are conceived chiefly as elements in the design. It is ability to accomplish this, with no loss of conviction, no degradation of the form to the status of mere pattern, that marks Renoir as an artist of the first magnitude. His design is created out of many lesser designs, so that every part of his canvases has an intrinsic interest as well as a functional interest, the whole forming a monumental effect comparable with that of Giorgione or Titian. His pictures have come to be as varied and harmonious as a musical symphony or a work of polyphonic scope.

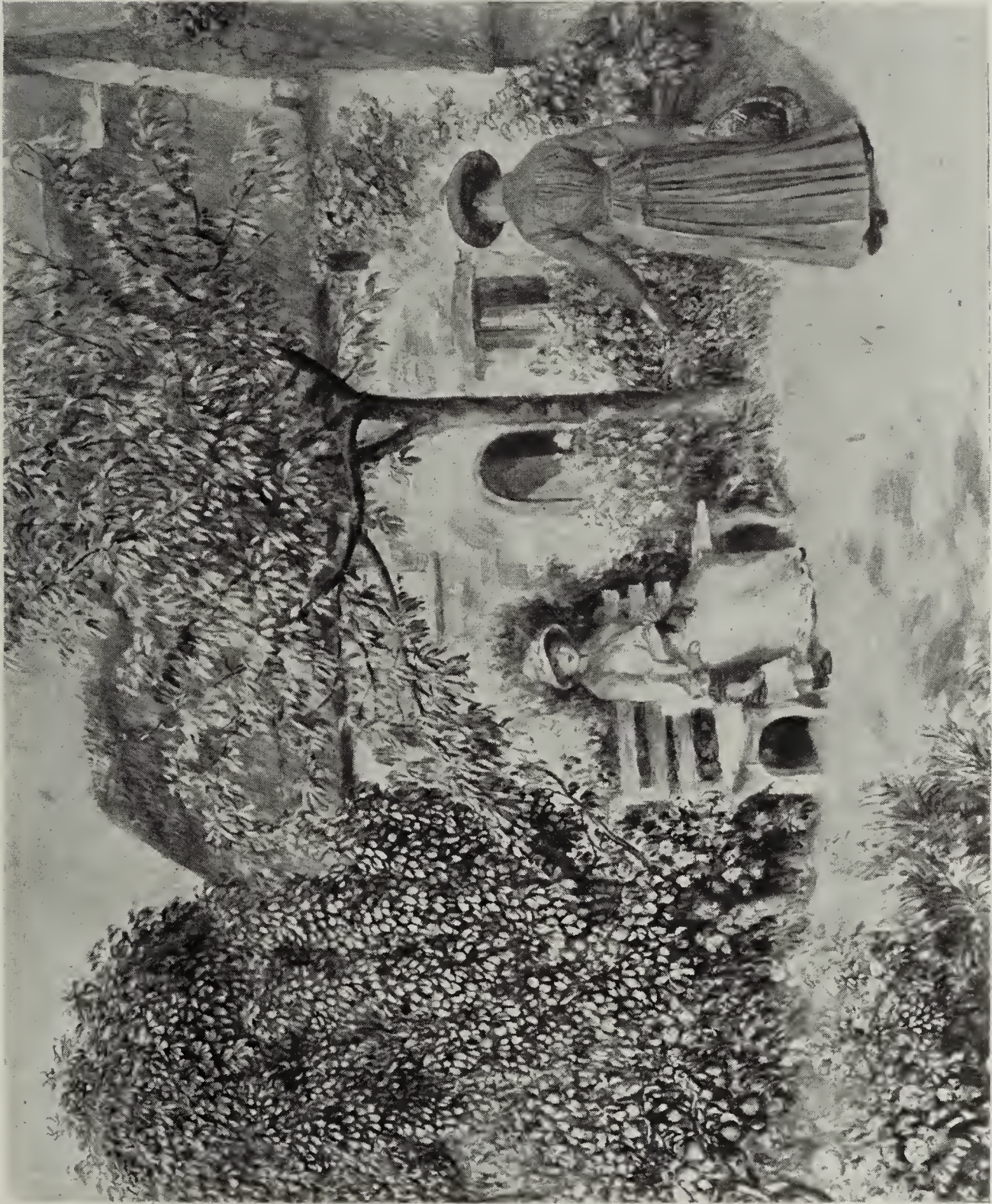
At the beginning of the present century, Renoir had reached the full control of his powers and thereafter he deepened and enriched still further his color-values. In his figures there is an increasing use of red and a more voluminous and more voluptuous three-dimensional solidity. In his landscapes there is often a major theme of emerald, ruby, or lilac-blue, around which there is rose melting into violet, blue into shimmering green, with a pearly atmosphere, giving an effect of deep quietude, dignity,



Renoir

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Renoir

serenity, majesty, peace. In everything he painted there is a more convincing massiveness, and a more powerful three-dimensional rhythm. The means he adapted to this end is a swirl not unlike that of Rubens, but of larger scope and much more moving. Color becomes paramount—it indicates perspective, suffuses the whole painting, increases the contrapuntal richness of forms, welds the units together into a rich and powerful design. He left his preceptors constantly further behind, and attained by his own technique to much of the classic spirit of the best Renaissance painting. This classic spirit becomes increasingly evident towards the end of his life, and shows how profoundly he had assimilated and lent new life to all the valuable influences in art. More than that of any other painter his work constitutes an epitome and rounding-out of the whole history of painting.

We may now summarize Renoir's characteristics as they appear in all periods of his work. The foundation of his painting is color as it came from Fragonard and Rubens, and through Rubens from the Venetians. In the use of color he was an impressionist, though he transcended everything in that technique which is suggestive of formula or mannerism. It is not only in the use of color that he advances upon Rubens and Fragonard, for his spirit is essentially different. There is at all times in Rubens's and Fragonard's work a kind of remoteness and, in consequence, loss of perfect reality. In Rubens, this took the form of the flamboyant, the grandiose; in Fragonard, of triviality, of artificiality. Renoir's debt to the Dutch, to Velasquez, and to the realists Courbet and Manet of his own century, is evidenced by his much greater interest in the things of every-day life. His temperament made him love and observe attentively the commonplace people and incidents of life, so that in his hands they cease to be commonplace and become suffused with poetic charm. He is at home with them and he delights in enveloping them with the wealth of sensuous quality, the voluptuousness, that came from his own rich endowment.

His delight is that of an artist, not of an animal, for his voluptuousness is free from sensuality. He has an unerring grasp upon essentials; hence the truth and naturalness of his drawing, the success with which he makes his people reveal themselves in the performance of some ordinary act, such as taking hold of a cup or handling a needle, or in the unpremeditated play of their features. His sense of the dramatic in the events of every-day life is comparable to that of Degas, but unlike him

Renoir never despises the people whom he shows acting. His pleasure in the beautiful things of the world is revealed in the richness and delicacy of his textiles and in his rendering of human beings pulsating with life and glad to be alive.

The sensuous charm and the general decorative quality of Renoir's work is achieved by color-chords of a wealth nowhere else paralleled. In Rubens the color is less brilliant and less real, and he lacked the characteristically French delicacy of Renoir, which refined and made more subtle the elements of decoration. In Renoir, everything is fluid, light, transparent; the flesh is luminous, the atmosphere is pearly; when the surfaces are hard, their color is jewel-like. In his work, vulgar scenes and persons lose their vulgarity. A group of them, seen as an ensemble, resembles the flowers in a bouquet. His nudes are symbols, not naked women. Nobody ever painted with more improvisation, more spontaneously, freely, than he did.

All this decorative quality is not purchased at the expense of form, of reality, for his rich, juicy, varied, glowing color is also structural and compositional. It functions in design, reinforces drawing and perspective, and heightens the rhythms of the picture. His line is not only rhythmic but is as expressive of the character of personality, of drama, as is Degas's. He can give the grandeur and majesty of landscape in a degree comparable to Claude's, and he advances upon Claude in that he secured these effects by means of color. In landscape on a smaller scale he rivalled Constable, and in his sense of the *intime* quality of interiors he is the equal of Chardin. He has the poetry of Giorgione, but it is a more homely poetry, less arcadian, with less of the pathos of distance.

His weaknesses spring from the same source as his strength—his absorption in the life that is visible to the eye, his unreflectiveness, his incomparable sensuous charm. He has not the impersonality or quite the subtlety of Velasquez, nor the supreme economy of means, the restraint, the poignancy of human values, the mysticism of Rembrandt. He is less imaginative than Giorgione, less elevated than Titian, less dramatic than Tintoretto, less powerful than Michel Angelo or Cézanne, and less completely absorbed in the essential, to the neglect of all secondary matters, than Giotto. But purely as a plastic artist, he has greater command of means, greater variety of effect, and certainly a greater decorative quality than any other painter.

Pattern and Plastic Form.

BY LAURENCE BUERMAYER.

IN Mr. Clive Bell's book, *Art*, published in 1914, is expressed a conviction and a standard widely influential in contemporary art-criticism. The burden of Mr. Bell's contention, that the distinguishing excellence of a work of art has nothing to do with its subject-matter but that it depends on what he calls "significant form," an independent and specifically aesthetic relation between the elements of the work of art, is not original with him. It is clearly foreshadowed in Pater's assertion that art at all times strives towards the condition of music, in which the appeal to emotion is made without any recourse to images of real things. For this view Pater himself never claimed any essential originality: he regarded it as a simple generalization from the work of the school of Giorgione. So far as the effect of Mr. Bell's book was limited to driving home to the popular consciousness the truth that a picture is not good because it resembles its original, points a moral or tells an entertaining story, he was to be commended for a real service to the cause of education. The same thing may be said of his work of undermining the saccharine tradition which goes back to Raphael. Since the views against which he contended were overwhelmingly dominant in the popular consciousness, his book undoubtedly exercised a beneficial influence in many quarters.

Unfortunately, however, he did not content himself with exposing the more flagrant errors of popular aesthetics, but offered an aesthetic theory of his own, as far removed from the truth as were the views which he attacked. Starting with the premise, unexceptionable in itself however little original, that a picture is not necessarily good because it mirrors accurately some real thing, he draws the conclusion, which does not in the least follow, that the goodness of a picture is totally and absolutely independent of its relation to any real thing. The only alternatives which he contemplates, in other words, are slavish imitation and wholly abstract or non-representative art. It is the contention of the present paper that this sharp distinction leads to a reduction of "significant form" to what may better be termed "pattern," that it makes decorative design as we find that in

rugs or in wall-paper the ideal of all plastic art, and that "significant form," as Mr. Bell understands the word, would more accurately be described as "insignificant" or "meaningless" form.

A picture, Mr. Bell says, is good if it possesses "significant form." We should naturally expect such a statement to be followed by a definition of this all-important quality. No such definition is ever even attempted. Instead we are told that "significant form" is such an arrangement of the elements in any work of art as is productive of aesthetic emotion. When we ask what aesthetic emotion is (a necessary question, since according to Mr. Bell most of what passes for aesthetic emotion is mere sentiment), the answer is that it is the emotion which is produced by significant form! Of course, nothing is ever fully definable in terms of anything else; definition in the end resolves itself into mere pointing, an indication of some immediate experience which must be had or felt if the definition is to be intelligible; but it is generally regarded as the mark of intelligence, and certainly of scientific analysis, to defer this recourse to the merely immediate as long as possible. However impossible it may be to find words for ultimate realities, we are entitled to expect that relations, the things with which what is defined has affinities, be pointed out. We find nothing of the sort in Mr. Bell, so that "significant form" remains wholly esoteric and recondite. The lady who by her reiteration of the only too familiar refrain, "I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like," earned Whistler's retort, "A quality, madam, which we share with the lower animals," seems to have differed in this respect from Mr. Bell only by her superior modesty. Mr. Bell, it appears, knows what he likes and calls that and only that art.

Admitting the value of Mr. Bell's castigation of popular errors, it is indeed a question whether the good his book has accomplished among the aesthetically illiterate is not more than counterbalanced by the harm it has done among the discriminating. It is important that the specific which characterizes a work of art and distinguishes it from a mere report of objective fact should be recognized and valued. This form, as it appears in painting, is perhaps better termed "plastic form" than "significant form;" it does furnish the criterion of properly aesthetic quality; but the manner of Mr. Bell's advocacy of it, the obscurity in which he has shrouded it and the Olympian assurance with which he dogmatizes about it, have seriously compromised its recognition. Oracular mystification where clear definition is the first requisite, and display of unbounded certitude in the early

stages of analysis, where everything ought to be tentative and hypothetical, are perfectly adapted to compromise any cause.

The source of Mr. Bell's vagueness is not far to seek. It is due to the absolute divorce between form and subject-matter, to the repudiation not only of copying, but of every type or degree of interpretation. In opposition to Mr. Bell, we shall seek to show that plastic form is only relatively independent of subject-matter, and that while subject-matter does not in any degree prescribe the detail of an artist's work, it does furnish the point of departure and relatively, at least, fix the conditions of success. When the clue which it offers is entirely discarded, when truth, imaginative or interpretative as well as literal, is utterly banished from art, the artist is reduced to playing with sensations, to devising patterns which have, to be sure, many elements of aesthetic appeal, but which are far from sufficient for great art.

We shall attempt to show this in detail by examples of the sort of criticism to which pure abstractionism leads. The general criticism, however, may be illustrated in music and literature as well as in painting. To condemn program-music, the bleating of the sheep and blowing of the wind in Strauss's "Don Quixote," is one thing; to say that the best music is the most "pure," the most destitute of any expression of human emotion, is a very different thing: it is to exalt Haydn above Beethoven. Similarly with literature. It is often said that aesthetically style counts and ideas do not count, and as evidence the case of Dante or of Milton is cited. The belief of these men in what Santayana calls the Christian epic now finds little echo in most cultivated readers, but the value of their style, the greatness of their literary stature, no one denies. To say, however, that their ideas, the content of their poetry, are dead, is to forget how much of their work goes beyond any mere scheme of supernatural salvation, how much of it expresses human feeling and aspiration as they appear in realms wholly non-theological. To say that, because any particular idea becomes obsolete eventually, the permanent value of poetry can be achieved by someone who has no ideas but is concerned to make a deft arrangement of words, is utterly false, and it is the precise analogue of the view that great painting springs not from any vision of the *world*, but from a fondness for making decorative upholstery.

The view of which Mr. Bell has been taken as the representative is thus the view, already combatted in the columns of this JOURNAL, that art is an affair of the museum, a separate compart-

ment in life into which we can enter only by turning our back upon the rest of life. It is not necessary to debate further this persuasion or prejudice in its general form; it may be useful, however, to point out the difference made by it in the practical procedure of education. If the view is true, then training in art, either in the appreciation or the execution of works of art, is a training in special tricks of the trade, devices or rules by which good patterns may be made and distinguished from bad. Specimens of such tricks, examples of such rules, are what we find in picture-galleries, to which accordingly the potential artist or connoisseur is directed to go for the acquisition of something as essentially abstract and specialized as skill in playing chess.

The opposed view, here defended, is that what the picture-gallery offers is of course valuable, but that it is valuable as the means of seeing, through the paint and canvas, the objective world. Not, of course, the world as a mere matter of physics or chemistry or impersonal sensation, but the world seen by the individual painter. The reply of Renoir to the questioner who asked him where one learned to paint, "Au musée, parbleu!" may be interpreted to mean what the pattern-makers mean, or—a very different matter—that it is through the vision of others that the painter sharpens his own. Which interpretation is to be chosen, Renoir's own practice makes abundantly clear. No modern painter, assuredly, combined a greater store of illumination derived from the traditions of the past with a fresher eye for the life about him, the unhackneyed, unstereotyped *things* of the contemporary scene. Our contention, in brief, is that the primary purpose of education in art is refinement and enrichment of the act of seeing, and that the plastic form which is not an expression of such seeing is trite, superficial or merely decorative.

Mr. Bell is to a large extent responsible for the prevalent confusion between pattern and plastic form, between merely decorative arrangement of line, color and mass, and the organization of those elements by which a convincing reality ("convincing," not "photographic") of an artist's experience with an objective world is achieved. Capitalizing Mr. Bell's objectionable mystification and cocksureness and throwing to the winds incontestable laws of psychology and logic, a host of writers have added other absurdities, in efforts to prove that art is something essentially separate from every-day experience. They thus lose the clue afforded by imaginative interpretation of the reality of things and fill in the resulting vacuum with elaborate definitions of pattern that extend from deification of platitudes, such as "significant

form," all the way to the mechanical formulas buttressed by higher mathematics and baptized by the hypnotic slogan "dynamic symmetry." Each of these concoctions is guaranteed to contain the secret of all great art. One of them offers a set or table of the elements of design, comparable to the table of chemical elements, and gives directions for combining them into satisfactory forms, thus reducing all "design" to an arrangement of lines and areas in two dimensions. Not a suspicion, apparently, occurs that all such elements and relations are wholly relative to the particular purpose of the painter, to the aspect of reality of which he is giving his personal version, or that in great art the rules laid down are as often broken as they are obeyed. Rules of this sort are useful to anyone who has nothing of his own to say and who wishes to learn to repeat what someone else has already said. They are useful to the real artist or student in precisely the same way that crutches are useful to the athlete.

What lends plausibility to the confusion of plastic form with pattern is the fact that a pattern, a decorative arrangement of superficial qualities, is usually if not always to be found in works of art. Decoration, in other words, is a quality of painting, and a valuable quality, if it is not made the be-all and end-all of art. The mathematical formulation of pattern, with its attendant rigidity, is not essential to the reduction of plastic form to pattern, so that the case for pattern is really stronger than many of its advocates make it out to be. Decorative arrangement of line and mass, however, at its best falls far short of the aesthetic richness of truly expressive plastic form, and some illustration of this fact must be given if the true relation of the two is to be made apparent.

In every great painter the presence of pattern can easily be demonstrated by an analysis of his pictures. In Giotto, for example, the rhythm and sequence of line, distribution of masses, and contrast and harmony of color, have an immediate and obvious decorative effect, but the expression proper (not of course merely facial expression but imaginative insight) goes far beyond decoration. It resides in the restraint and dignity with which the figures are conceived, in the mystical quality conveyed largely by a pervasive, transfiguring color-glow and by a convincing spaciousness, attained by few and, in themselves, rather schematic indications of perspective. These things enter also into the pattern, but it is in their service in revealing a world which only Giotto was capable of seeing that their most moving aesthetic effect resides. This is true also of El Greco, whose mystical world

is revealed no less convincingly than is Giotto's, different as is its fervidness from the serenity of Giotto.

For other examples we may take Rembrandt and Manet. In both, of course, the pattern is present. In Rembrandt it is formed largely by gradations of light, contrasts of light and shadow, by which colors usually dull in themselves are made to glow and display an extraordinary richness, and by which masses scarcely defined by linear contour are given body and reality, and are organized in space. The pattern in Rembrandt, however, is much less clear-cut, rhythmic and decorative than, for example, in Botticelli. Rembrandt's enormous superiority over Botticelli is due to something quite apart from pattern; it is due to his ability to make the play of light over flesh seem to illuminate the depths of personality, set forth the living human being who is portrayed. This is done by no mere emphasis of the ordinary signs of emotion, the facial gestures indicating pain, hope, sorrow or compassion, all of which depend upon more or less casual associations of ideas. It is truly plastic, and yet much more than decorative. It contains what plastic form always, and decoration never, achieves: a grasp of the essential nature of a thing, the unique quality which makes the thing what it is, which is shared with nothing else in the world. Rembrandt's painting of human hair, for example, is much slighter as decoration than Botticelli's; certainly it is equally far from photographic literalism; but it is infinitely more moving, because it gives us, as Botticelli's does not, an essential reality and not a superficial embellishment.

In Manet this reality is primarily achieved by the use of broad brush-strokes which, omitting irrelevant detail, yet give the natural, essential quality of things in their familiar matter-of-fact aspects. Different as these aspects are from those which engaged the attention of Giotto, El Greco, or Rembrandt, they are equally essential and distinctive. The critic whose eyes are closed to everything but pattern can see in these brush-strokes merely the elements in a particular type of decoration. This decorative aspect is indubitably there, it is an important part of the total effect, but to attach exclusive importance to it is as grave an error as to consider only the illustrative aspect of Manet's work.*

Critics of the "advanced school" may be expected to reply to the foregoing contentions that they revert to the popular literary standard of plastic criticism. The difference between plastic form, as here conceived, and merely literary form must

* For more detailed analysis of the work of Giotto, El Greco, Rembrandt, and Manet, see Albert C. Barnes, *The Art in Painting*.

be pointed out. If in Giotto or El Greco the effect, as above expounded, depended upon identification of the persons portrayed as Jesus, the Virgin, or the other figures of the Christian hierarchy, the charge would be justified. There would then be reliance upon what we know *about* the things shown, and not upon what we actually see upon the canvas. The things would be labels, not realities. But in all the painters in question the illustration is given in good plastic terms. We see and feel the reality as the painter saw and felt it, and we need no extraneous associations to eke out what is actually presented. What is characteristic of merely literary painting is that the image set before us is trite and meaningless in itself, and that it derives its interest from the part played by the thing represented in practical life. In true plastic form, what is represented is significant not as an arbitrary symbol but as something of which the meaning is felt immediately, as an integral part of the actual image.

The interpretation of plastic form as pattern involves a denial to the painter of all effects that involve more than mere sensation. According to it, the funded results of past experience can never be more than adventitious associations, irrelevant to pictorial design. It is evident that the rejection of the meanings upon which human values depend, on the ground that they are inferred and not actually perceived, cannot stop short of such reduction to the bare immediate; it is equally evident that such rejection seriously compromises some of the purely plastic effects which are to be found in the work of the greatest artists. Space-composition and modelling, for example, depend upon revived experience of movement and touch; they are not directly given by paint on canvas; and if all meaning is to go, they must go too.* With them go all rhythm and movement in deep space, and landscape-painting and figure-painting join portraiture in the limbo of the "merely literary."

These consequences are ordinarily found so repellant that only a few pamphleteers, special advocates, and purveyors of new aesthetic pills and powders are willing to accept them. But they may impose also upon critics of real discernment, such as Mr. Roger Fry. Mr. Fry's knowledge and experience are extensive, and his integrity does not permit him to pronounce upon matters of legitimate doubt with the unlimited certainty usually charac-

* Hambidge did exclude space-composition from the range of legitimate plastic effects. Clive Bell's careful avoidance of specific statement on any point makes it impossible to say whether he would exclude it or not; in any case, however, his logic leaves no place for it.

teristic either of the extremely ignorant, or of the charlatan. He shares, however, the conception of form set forth by Clive Bell, at least to the extent of assuming that form is not only relatively but absolutely independent of the qualities of what art represents. This assumption is fully in harmony with his view of imagination as radically and essentially disjoined from practical life—the cardinal principle of what we have called the museum-theory of art.*

From this, the road leads straight to the conception of plastic form as pattern. Mr. Fry, at some expense of consistency, refuses to accept the repudiation of all meaning in form, but in the presence of many specific problems he does follow where his principle leads him. Thus, in an article on Cézanne in the *New Republic* of August 5, 1925, his detailed comments on Cézanne refer almost exclusively to the pattern there to be found. He notes the dignity, the reserve, the austerity of Cézanne's style, but these observations are the commonplaces of contemporary art-criticism and have little to do with specific analysis of plastic qualities. He observes also the rectangular simplicity, the recession, at right angles, of planes parallel to the plane of the picture, in contrast with the diagonal organization in El Greco's pictures; this, except for the reference to the third dimension, is almost purely a matter of pattern. Over and above this, he devotes himself chiefly to comment upon the multiplicity of strokes of pigment, the vast variety of subtle gradations in color out of which Cézanne built up all his more extended color-areas. The infinitude of this variety, plus its coördination, are what, he says, constitute Cézanne's "immense richness of aesthetic content."

Two things are notable in this analysis. First, it reduces the characteristic quality in Cézanne to an elaborate color-pattern, and this is not, in his account, related to Cézanne's characteristic manner of organizing space. Nothing at all is said of the use made by Cézanne of the delicately modulated color-scheme to give, with a minimum of modelling by light and shadow, the solid reality of objects, and their rhythmic organization in deep space. Of the correlation, to this end, of distortion with the use of color, nothing is said at all. The rendering of space and solidity, with a power comparable to Michel Angelo's, in terms of subtly-used color, and in addition to this the realization of convincing individuality in particular things in a degree worthy of Rembrandt

* See the writer's article, *Some Popular Fallacies in Aesthetics*, *The Dial*, February, 1924.

or Velasquez, is Cézanne's distinctive accomplishment, but it is an accomplishment to which anyone concerned exclusively or primarily with pattern must be wholly blind.

Second, what Mr. Fry says of Cézanne's use of color, its derivation from the Impressionists and its advance beyond them in power, variety and freedom from literalism, is equally true of Renoir, at least in his later works. Merely from the point of view of richness of color-chords, and their combination into a satisfying decorative unity, Mr. Fry's eulogy is *less* applicable to Cézanne than it is to Renoir: the distinction between the two painters, the fact that Renoir's employment of color is more largely devoted to decoration, is one which Mr. Fry is prevented from seeing by his failure to differentiate between expressive or fully plastic form and decorative form or pattern. This is not to say that Renoir failed to catch the essential quality of things, but the essential quality, as he saw it, was more obviously natural, more joyous, more spontaneously appealing, than it was to Cézanne, therefore more fittingly set in a context of rich and brilliant decoration. No considerations relating merely to pattern, in brief, are sufficient to account for either the distinctive quality of Renoir and Cézanne, or the distinctive difference between them. Pattern is merely one of the means by which the artist reveals his interpretation of experiences in the external world.

If the confusion of pattern and plastic form distorts the vision and vitiates the criticism of a critic so enlightened and well-informed as Mr. Fry, it is scarcely surprising that in the hands of critics far less enlightened and well-informed it should lead to a new academicism, an academicism which promises to become as lifeless and as enslaving as the Raphaelesque tradition of prettiness and sentiment.

"Intelligence means the purposive reorganization, through action, of the material of experience."—JOHN DEWEY, *Democracy and Education*.

The Dow Method and Public School Art.

BY THOMAS MUNRO.

ONE who looks over the situation in American school art work is constantly impressed with the far-reaching influence of the late Arthur Wesley Dow, of Teachers' College, Columbia University. East and West, in state and city school boards, in conventions of art teachers, his name has become a rallying cry for the liberal factions, usually far in the minority, that struggle for advance toward modern methods of instruction. Many of these teachers and supervisors studied directly with Professor Dow, then went back to their home states to champion his ideas against the inertia of politics-ridden school administrations. To such lonely and hard-pressed missionaries, the memory of their leader is an almost sacred symbol for truth and progressiveness in general, and some of them regard his teaching with a veneration that is not always conducive either to clear understanding or to open-minded criticism.

If it is true that the school art situation cannot be understood without reference to Professor Dow's influence, it is doubly true that his writings cannot be justly estimated without reference to that situation as he perceived it. His life-work was a struggle against the academicism which he saw throughout the field, and his own ideals were always presented in sharp contrast to it. What was this old régime, and what did he offer instead?

A future historian may perhaps look tolerantly on the shortcomings of the early stage in American public school art work. Its leaders had a difficult task in gaining for art any recognition at all in the curriculum, against the vigorous protest of hard-headed farmers and business men, who thought anything beside the three R's a wasteful indulgence in frills and fancies. If admitted at all, it had always to conform to popular standards. Thus picture-study was made a vehicle for patriotic and moral lessons; drawing and painting consisted in trying to reproduce a box in true perspective, or a spray of flowers in pretty tints. Most teachers, of course, were almost totally untrained either in the technique or appreciation of art; they were few and over-worked; hence their methods had to be capable of easy, standardized application to large classes, with clear-cut standards for

grading results. Books of motives for decorative pattern were given out to them, simple, stereotyped lotus-flowers, fleur-de-lys and other conventional forms. Minute directions were prescribed for conducting an art class; in some cases, for example, each child was to have a sheet of paper printed with dots, and move his pencil in unison with the rest, three dots to the right, two down, and so on until a cat or house was outlined.

More or less pardonable as such expedients may have been at first, in frontier communities, they could only disgust a man of Dow's intelligence and European training, especially when he saw them entrenched and perpetuated long after the need had passed, in wealthy and cultivated cities, like Boston and New York. Attempting to influence certain federated groups of art teachers toward liberal ideals, he found them controlled by politicians, incredibly narrow-minded, without genuine interest in either art or education, hand in glove with dealers in text-books and art materials, who found ways to checkmate any forward-looking proposal. Within these federations, and against reactionary school boards everywhere, his pupils and their liberal allies are still struggling with little success, in great need of organized effort to unite and support them.

Dow was far from unsuccessful, however, in gathering about him groups of devoted followers, from his first efforts in Boston in 1889, through his years of teaching at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, at the Art Student's League, in summers at Ipswich, Massachusetts, and from 1904 until the day of his death in 1922, as head of the department of Fine Arts at Teachers' College. No small part of his influence at all these places was due to a personality that drew affection and sympathetic response to his enthusiasm, as well as respect for his clear and sensible thinking.

The method elaborated in these years of teaching was first conceived in Boston, with the aid of Ernest Fenollosa, then in charge of the Japanese collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, and was expressed in the widely-used book entitled *Composition*.^{*} Polemically, the idea most insisted on there is the falsity of the academic division of art into representative and decorative, both conceived as imitation, the one of natural objects and the other of conventional historic patterns. On the contrary, said Dow, both aspects should be sought together, natural objects being taken as themes for creating new, beautiful forms. Instead of the old copying method he proposed instruction in the principles

^{*} Ninth edition, N. Y., 1923. See also *Theory and Practice of Teaching Art* and *Constructive Art Teaching*, both published by Teachers' College.

of design or composition, which he redefined and listed under the headings of Opposition, Transition, Subordination, Repetition and Symmetry. Each he illustrated with many examples chosen with catholic taste and an eye to underlying resemblances from the Greek, Oriental, Gothic, Renaissance and modern traditions, from textiles, pottery, furniture and architecture as well as from painting and sculpture. This approach he believed would involve "a new classification of the world's art, cutting across the historical, topical and geographical lines of development . . . with many examples differing as to time, locality, material and subject, but alike in art-structure." The elements in art he classified as line, notan, (dark-and-light) and color, and went on to show how the principles of harmonious composition can be realized in each, and in combinations of them.

So stated in general, these principles are unexceptionable, and there is no doubt that their adoption and study would provide a considerable advance over most of the methods now in use. But many significant things have happened in the fields of educational and aesthetic psychology since Professor Dow formulated his principles, in the light of which his way of presenting the subject to students requires considerable modification. His former pupils and successors at Teachers' College, Horace Mann, Lincoln and other experimental schools have not been slow to make such changes in their actual conduct of the work, although respect for his memory has restrained explicit criticism.

Some of these teachers, for example, are calling the attention of students to Post-Impressionist tendencies in design, toward which, although tolerant, Professor Dow had no positive sympathy. All are attempting more strenuously to encourage individual variation and originality in creating new designs, an aim which Dow recognized in general, but for which there was little place in his rather standardized system of procedure. There is greater attention also to the problems of stimulating the interest of children in art work, and correlating it with other phases of their mental growth. In view of these ends, pupils are led to choose subjects for plastic expression from their own experience. By the project method and other devices their initiative is encouraged, and art-work made a process of gradual, continuous enrichment of everyday life. They are following no rigid order of progress, and are using color from the start, not beginning with abstract lines—a step whose propriety Dow admitted in the case of young pupils only, and which he never incorporated in his own method.

Along with these changes, Professor Dow's successors have found it possible to retain and reapply a large part of his method, especially the insistence on principles of design. But his own writings give little indication that in recent years he had reconsidered the method in the light of newer psychological tendencies, especially the Deweyan conception of education as natural growth. The order of steps which he prescribes is one of abstract logical classification, rather than of the necessary sequence of steps in mental development. Without applying her criticism explicitly to the Dow method, Miss Belle Boas (a former pupil, now Director of Fine Arts at the Horace Mann School) has put her finger upon its essential practical weakness: "A course of study in spelling doesn't arbitrarily begin with words of one syllable in the first grade to progress to complicated six-syllable words in the high school, but rather follows the growth in the child's vocabulary as he finds his spelling complexities grow through his needs."*

Dow's method begins with what is logically simplest, the basic elements in a work of art, such as lines, dark and light spots, hues and intensities, and with the general definitions of the principles of design. From these atomic elements he invites the pupil to put together a beautiful form, leading him on in strict logical order from simple to complex: first straight lines, properly spaced, then curves, then two values of light and dark, then three, four, five values, then one hue in two and three values, two hues and so on until a form as complex as an ordinary painting is finally reached. This is a "natural method," says Dow, "of exercises in progressive order, first building up very simple harmonies, then proceeding on to the highest forms of composition. . . . It offers a means of training for the creative artist . . ."

To a mature and scientific mind such a schematic analysis of art is undeniably interesting, and to a teacher it may be helpful as a reference map of the field. But to propose it as a method of creating beautiful forms is to reveal a decided lack of familiarity with the psychology of aesthetic creation. New and vital plastic forms are rarely if ever conceived through such a course of plodding synthesis, but rather all at once as a new vision, the product, largely impulsive and automatic, of many experiences in looking at nature and art with a selective and reconstructing eye. The memory of elements and principles may come in to refine and proportion after synthesis or along with it, each of the various

* *Art in the School*, 1924, p. 20.

phases of intelligent organization occurring now and then, in no fixed order, as the trend of the situation indicates. This does not mean that rational analysis and synthesis, with use of general principles, have no place in art education; but that the primary concern of the teacher is to secure vitality and freedom for perception, emotion and imagination. Intelligence can liberate and harmonize creative impulses, but it can never build out of bare logical concepts a form touched with life.

The Chinese and Japanese artists, whom Professor Dow constantly holds up as examples, sometimes adhered strictly to certain fixed rules, and their works, pruned down to the last degree of subtle economy, provide him with many instances of design from a few means, such as two values of a single hue. But what we prize most in these works is the inventive imagination that worked through the rules (often irrelevant religious tenets) to some unique and striking result. When the rules alone are grasped, the products are as mechanical and lifeless as the pictures in the Japanese manner by Dow and his pupils, which are scattered as models through the book.

Aside from educational method, there are serious misconceptions of plastic form involved in Professor Dow's analysis—some of them springing, perhaps, from his preoccupation with the Japanese form. Had his feeling for Venetian painting, for Renoir, Cézanne and contemporary movements, been as appreciative as for the Japanese print, he would have seen more clearly the possible functions of color, merged with line and light, in building up structure and organizing a picture with pervasive atmosphere. Instead, he conceived of design in basically linear terms: "A picture may be said to be in its beginning actually a pattern of lines." On the Line-idea "hinges the excellence of the whole, for no delicacy of tone, or harmony of color can remedy a bad proportion."* This misses entirely the fact, all-important in painting since the Venetians, that color can be so merged with a linear pattern (not superficially added to it) as to transform entirely the nature of that pattern and the rightness of its proportions.

To the Japanese, whom he praises for thinking of painting as "the art of two dimensions," may also be due his tendency to conceive design as flat, and his failure to grasp the function of solidity and depth in painting. For a painter to work for roundness and solidity, he thought, was to imitate natural objects and to encroach on sculpture; light and dark were of value chiefly

* *Composition*, p. 44.

as contrasting areas on a flat surface, rather than as means of modelling. Such a defense of exotic forms was no doubt salutary at a time when most academic painters knew only the Florentine and Dutch. But to ignore the building up of designs of solid objects in deep space, and the relation of color thereto, is to ignore the main achievement of European painting from Giotto to Cézanne, and to leave one's account of plastic design sadly incomplete.

Although neglecting one of the most important elements in pictorial space, the third dimension, Professor Dow declares the final criterion of harmony in design to be Good Spacing. Yet he leaves its meaning undefined ("The mystery of Spacing will be revealed to the mind that has developed Appreciation"), and gives little reason why the selected examples of good spacing are good.

In short, Professor Dow's "synthetic" presentation of design fails in several ways to become genuinely or completely synthetic. It is of doubtful utility as a help to any creative synthesis, because, as noted above, it is foreign in its method to the psychology of all artistic growth and construction. Leaving out organic color, depth and solidity, it is incomplete as a theoretical account of the important elements in plastic design, and such elements as it gives are left more or less in isolation: there is no indication, that is, how these elements are completely merged in the color-line-and-light forms of modern painting. Yet, for all its inadequacies, it deserves respect as a landmark in American education, for its clear statement of a method still far in advance of those used in most schools, and for the example it offers of a sensitive and penetrating mind at work upon a generous variety of artistic forms.

The Journal of the Barnes Foundation will be published at irregular intervals and will be sent to institutions and individuals interested in art and education.

A Mark of Progress.

BY PAUL GUILLAUME.

WE who have been active in the art-world of Paris during the past twenty years are struck by the greater advantages which we enjoy over our predecessors of the previous generation. A brief recital of a few of the significant details of each period will illustrate the point.

In 1885, fifteen years after Renoir had painted many of the masterpieces now in the important galleries of the world, those paintings were either stacked in his garret or exposed on the sidewalks of obscure streets in front of the shops of a few small dealers, with prices marked in chalk on the paintings. Those prices ranged from 100 to 200 francs, and buyers were so few and far between that both artist and dealer often were without adequate food and clothing. Manet, Degas and Cézanne were better off for physical necessities because of private incomes; but the best of their paintings could have been bought for about the same price as Renoir's. Today, if any of those 100-franc pictures were offered for sale it would be competed for by hundreds of people, and the price would mount to more than a million francs. Until Renoir had passed the age of fifty, the income from the sale of his paintings was less than that of a clerk in a small business.

The cause of this tardy recognition of genius was neither the absence of money from circulation nor the lack of wealthy patrons to have their portraits painted or their houses hung with expensive pictures. The Paris salon of those days was an enormous affair and from its annual exhibitions people bought the thin versions of the stale traditions which then, as at the present age, make up academy exhibitions the world over. At that period also, just as now, the official academy was the source from which politicians, social climbers, bad painters and ignorant critics, derived the sustenance which the uninformed public was willing to supply in the holy name of art. Official painters, now forgotten, thrived and luxuriated, while Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro and Van Gogh, now worshipped in the Louvre, nearly starved. In those days, an artist of independent vision accepted poverty, public slander and nearly life-long social ostracism, as the price

necessary to pay for maintaining his artistic soul. That they did pay, is one of the reasons why we reap so much more quickly the fruits which grew from the seeds sowed by them.

By 1904, independence had become so much a habit with real artists that the *Salon d'Automne* was established by a group of painters who made the achievements of Renoir and Cézanne and their colleagues the point of departure for their own work. The exhibition was so successful that a second and a third salon, each more liberal, followed in quick succession. These three independent exhibitions have stimulated public interest to such an extent that few if any cultivated French people even visit the official salon and certainly buy none of its wares. The spirits of Manet, Renoir, Cézanne and their group have triumphed.

It must not be supposed, however, that the insurgents of 1904 have lain in flowery beds of ease, supplied by obliging dealers and an intelligent public. The real creators and free spirits of that group had hardships similar to those of their predecessors but the hardships were not so severe and did not last so long. The small number of the public who recognized the two most important painters of that period, Picasso and Matisse, were able to accompany their enthusiasm with so few purchases of pictures that these artists were often desperately poor.

It was at about that time that I first saw the work of Picasso, then at the height of what is known as his "Blue Period," at two small dealers, Sago and Weil. I bought several fine Picassos, vowing never to sell them. Shortly afterward at the house of an explorer, I saw for the first time some of the ancient negro carvings, now so popular, but at that time unknown to dealers. I fell a victim to the passion for that ancient art which has mastered me ever since. Conflict between my desire to keep the Picassos and my yearning for the negro statues could have been avoided if I could have obtained a few hundred francs. It was solved by my selling the Picassos and buying the negro statues. Last summer a dealer in Paris sold one of those same Picasso's for 150,000 francs; I had paid 500 francs for it about fifteen years previously. It was at that early period that some of the finest Picassos found their way into the collection now belonging to the Barnes Foundation, and for about the same prices as I paid for mine. It was then also that Picasso was so "hard-up" and his work was in so small demand that he sold the contents of his entire studio, upwards of twenty important paintings, to a Paris dealer for approximately 2000 francs. Last winter, I bought one of those same Picasso's, from that same dealer, for

100,000 francs and considered myself lucky to get it. The point of this recital is that during the same period of time—about fifteen years—in which the work of Renoir and Cézanne had remained unrecognized and unsold, Picasso, a more radical painter than his predecessors, has achieved international renown with its corresponding rewards.

It has been my good fortune to have had as friends a number of contemporary painters at the time when they were struggling through the privations which seem to be the fate of nearly all free spirits in art. Of that group, my memories of Modigliani, Utrillo, Soutine and Chirico are the most vivid. Not one of these men had another serious interest in life except to paint; nor were any of them in the least excited when we predicted that fame and fortune would surely be theirs. For them the interest in a picture ceased when it had been painted. The only time that the idea of money associated itself in their mind with their paintings was when the landlord told them that they would have to vacate if the overdue rent was not forthcoming immediately, or the *aubergiste* refused them further credit for food. It was at these crises that Modigliani, Utrillo and Soutine came down to earth long enough to state their plight to their friends. A few hundred francs would have bought a painting by any of them—(some of these paintings have since sold for nearly 100,000 francs each) but no dealers, except the most speculative ones with little or no clientele, ever bought them. Because of these periodic collisions of business and art, I have had in my rooms at one time more than fifty each of paintings by Modigliani, Utrillo, Chirico and Soutine, bought sometimes for less than 100 francs each. Modigliani died very young, while still extremely poor, and Utrillo's and Soutine's health had been seriously crippled when the world began to notice them. Nevertheless, the period of hardships in the case of these young contemporaries has been much shorter than it was with Picasso and Matisse.

What are the causes of these changed conditions? Undoubtedly the trail blazed by Renoir, Manet, Cézanne and their group was important, perhaps one of the fundamentals. But by the beginning of this century the contributions of pioneers in other fields—psychology, education and aesthetics—had made itself felt throughout the world in a better understanding of the universal qualities of mankind, and their organization into principles for finer educational standards and for more rational conceptions of beauty and art. These liberalizing influences were all away from the congealed traditions and toward freedom of

expression in all phases of life; these influences were, therefore, more human and natural. The insurgents of twenty years ago thereby enjoyed a freedom which their great predecessors of the previous generation lacked. Art was no longer so absolutely controlled by politicians, and people saw through the ignorance of venal critics: the quickened general public intelligence created by the progressive workers in art, thought and science, had resulted in a comparatively small but infinitely more discriminating minority. People had begun to understand that art is not a slavish adherence to dead traditions, but is a manifestation of a living spirit expressed in the terms of its age. Independent journals voicing the modern conceptions of psychology, education and aesthetics had spread these progressive ideas to a sufficient number of people to make the independent painters more comprehensible to a more intelligent public. The practical good has been that the works of creative artists furnished them with the means of living and opened up for cultivated people a rich field for pleasurable social intercourse. That progress is steadily increasing, and for the simple reason that an enlightened minority of the public has learned to study a painting intelligently, and a still larger part of the public refuses to have its thoughts or its pleasures dictated by rings of politicians or proponents of outworn ideas and beliefs.

“Poetry is metrical and euphuistic discourse, expressing thought which is both sensuous and ideal. Such is poetry as a literary form; but if we drop the limitation to verbal expression, and think of poetry as that subtle fire and inward light which seems at times to shine through the world and to touch the images in our minds with ineffable beauty, then poetry is a momentary harmony in the soul amid stagnation or conflict,—a glimpse of the divine and an incitation to a religious life. Religion is poetry become the guide of life, poetry substituted for science or supervening upon it as an approach to the highest reality. Poetry is religion allowed to drift, left without points of application in conduct and without an expression in worship and dogma; it is religion without practical efficacy and without metaphysical illusion.”—GEORGE SANTAYANA, *Poetry and Religion*.

Educational Disorder at the Metropolitan Museum.

BY ALBERT C. BARNES.

MR. HUGER ELLIOTT'S position as Director of Educational Work at the Metropolitan Museum, New York City, the largest art institution in America, makes his article in the recently published volume, *The Significance of the Fine Arts*, profoundly important to all people interested in art and education. It reveals how certain fundamental and universally accepted principles of educational science are utterly ignored in high and influential circles.

Mr. Elliott attempts to defend the outworn belief that conventionality and good taste are one and the same thing. The real purpose of his discussion is to fasten upon the student a set of rules that are to be followed not as suggestions but as dogmas. The statement that "Standards have differed but little through the ages," reveals his blindness to what makes the individual traditions significant. It is true that there is a continuity of tradition in the great art of all ages, but it is entirely false that there is a set of rules which all artists have made it their first purpose to observe; and all of Mr. Elliott's specific comments show that it is this false sense which governs him. His discussion is chiefly incidental to an exposition of what he considers the four fundamental laws of design.

The first of these laws "The material out of which an article is made as well as the use to which it is to be put must determine its form" he illustrates by the obvious fact that pottery made to represent basket-work, or marble seats carved to represent the trunks of trees, are aesthetically displeasing; but no one would dispute that. To be enlightening, his law should point out the uses to which someone would be tempted to put a material, and show why, for reasons other than convention or obvious practical unfitness, the uses would be improper. For example, are the porcelain stoves which we associate with Nuremburg good or bad art, and why? However, nothing of the kind is attempted. So long as no really difficult issues are raised, Mr. Elliott may fairly be charged with taking refuge in generalizations too vague to have any meaning except for the totally illiterate.

His second law "The structure of the object must control its design" is a confused mixture of platitude and untenable dogma. If structural elements are directly used to realize aesthetic effect, that is, if they enter into a design, then the design must take account of their possibilities. That they do often lend themselves to such use is apparent from the aesthetic utilization of flying buttresses in Gothic architecture. But, as Santayana observes, the artist may elect to make decoration conceal structure if the structure is aesthetically unpromising, and in that case Mr. Elliott's principle has no application at all. The example which he gives is that of a Louis XVI commode, in which "The design suggests a structure of three vertical parts, whereas, as a matter of fact, the structural division is in two horizontal parts. When the drawer is opened, the structure is, as it were, cut in two." The fact that the opening of the drawer cuts it in half is aesthetically irrelevant, since when anyone opens the drawer he is interested in the practical use of the object itself, and not in its appearance. When the drawer is closed, and the design specified looked at for itself, it is seen to be very good.

Another "lack of proper relation between structure and design" is the use of stone to cover the steel frame of a building. This criticism is clearly a case of habit making itself a law without even a vestige of justification. Mr. Elliott says by implication that because stone was once used wholly as structure and not as veneer, its use as veneer is forever to be *verboten*. This is the "fixed form" in its most virulent type. It explains why so much of industrial art is "canned art."

The third law, "The ornament (if any) placed upon an article must emphasize its structure" would exclude all forms of ornament which are obviously unrelated to structure. The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, for example, is painted to represent an elaborate architectural design which corresponds to no real structure whatever. According to the statement in question, this design is basically wrong. In point of actual fact, it is recognized as one of the master-strokes of Michel Angelo's genius and as an essential part of one of the greatest achievements in the whole range of art. What Mr. Elliott really proves by such a statement is that industrial art as he teaches it is merely servile art, whereas in the principles which govern an intelligent conception of art, there is no difference between industrial art and fine art.

Mr. Elliott writes "One would scarcely wish to have a copy

of Goya's 'Execution of the Condemned' upon a cabinet." Probably most people would not, because of their preference for the merely pretty; but if anyone did, he would be guilty of no breach of good taste. To make the preferences of the majority legislative for all is to sink from art to politics, and to bad politics. But the authority of usage, and intrinsic aesthetic necessity, are two conceptions between which Mr. Elliott finds it at all times difficult or impossible to distinguish.

It is when Mr. Elliott comes to consider wall-paper that his theory of the close relation between material and decoration meets its most severe test, and suffers inglorious defeat. It is true, as he says, that wall-paper with a subdued design is ordinarily most effective, since it does not compete for attention with the pictures hung against it. But to propose that because the wall is actually flat, any suggestion of real distance is out of place, and that the same holds for the mural painter, is to go to the limit of absurdity. It implies that the solidity of the figures in the Sistine Chapel ceiling or in the Brancacci Chapel, and their placing in three dimensional space, becomes a serious offense against taste, and that the beautiful deep spaces in Raphael's "Miracle of Bolsena" are hopelessly bad! There could be no better instance of the use of a limited formula so far beyond its proper sphere that it becomes a mere engine of enslavement.

Mr. Elliott's bias is most clearly displayed in his fourth law, "When ornament derived from Nature is used, it must be conventionalized." This he supports by a lengthy castigation of mere imitation, and an eulogy of "creation." But nowhere is it more clearly shown than here that he understands "creation" as a repetition of what others have created. That art is not imitation of Nature has become one of the stalest of clichés, but his substitution of imitation of models for imitation of Nature is no advance aesthetically. Photography is no more tiresome than the reiteration of "correct" formulas. The fact that Mr. Elliott can find no third possibility beyond literal naturalism and "conventionalization" is eloquent testimony to the limitations of his aesthetics. The only thing that has any real aesthetic significance is a treatment of natural objects that uses traditions without being bound by them, and Mr. Elliott gives no indication of ever having heard of this. Although its role in industrial art is necessarily restricted, in comparison with the part played by it in fine art, if it is altogether absent the industrial art becomes mere industry and not art.

The additional reason given for "conventionalization" still further illustrates the tightness of Mr. Elliott's mind, his fondness for rigid distinctions and binding laws. In a man-made object, he says, a precise reproduction of Nature is incongruous: "The designer has nothing to do with the naturalist." Such a principle deprives the artist of the use of literal effects even when they are useful to his purpose. It would make Vermeer's or Jan Van Eyck's painting of textiles inartistic, because, from the painter's point of view, textiles are "Nature," that is, they are foreign to the specific medium of paint. Here as elsewhere there is not a suggestion that all rules are conditional, subject to the requirements of individual design, that there is no rule that cannot be broken freely if the artist's purpose requires it.

Mr. Elliott speaks constantly of "reason," "reasonableness," "clear thinking" and the like. These expressions, as he uses them, mean nothing but "academic formula;" what he thus and inevitably implies is that it is always reasonable to follow convention, never reasonable to depart from it. Like many another, he stops when reason has taken him as far as he wants to go, and in place of praise of reason we then have the statement, "True beauty defies analysis." In other words, when the formula is challenged to give an account of itself, it turns out that beauty is inscrutable, and that the challenge is therefore unjustifiable. With a logic of this kind at its service, no dogma need fear dethronement. All this means that the contributions to psychological aesthetics made since 1898 by men like Santayana have received no attention from men like Mr. Elliott.

The chorus of regret at public indifference to art is swelled by Mr. Elliott's voice. He laments the decay of general taste, the callousness displayed by most people in the presence of ugly objects, and calls for a renascence of aesthetic feeling. The reader of his article, however, cannot but feel that the indifference is easily explained while education in art remains in the hands of teachers who worship a conventional correctness lacking all savor or color. It is impossible not to wonder whether Mr. Elliott has ever asked himself if responsibility for the condition which he deplores does not rest partly on him. Apparently he has not. To others, however, who have observed the disastrous effects of Mr. Elliott's teachings, as revealed by their practice in the class-room and in the field of industrial art, it is clearly evident that the kind of teaching represented by Mr. Elliott's dogmas is fatal to either appreciation or creation of works of art.

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